An Approach to Augmenting the Maine Educational Assessment

The SAT Reasoning Test™ is currently being administered to all high school juniors in the state of Maine in order to increase readiness for college and other post secondary opportunities. To further enhance the alignment between the SAT, which is being used as the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) for 11th graders in Maine, and the expectations for student learning articulated in the Maine Learning Results, the State of Maine could augment the SAT with additional items measuring English language arts and mathematics proficiency. These additional items would likely be developed by the State's subcontractor, Measured Progress, Inc., and would be administered around the same time that the SAT is administered. A similar method of augmenting a college admissions test with items measuring specific content areas was proposed by the State of Michigan and approved, in principle, by the U.S. Department of Education.

Studies would be conducted to determine what types of items are needed and what content these items should measure so that the MEA is sufficiently aligned to the Maine Learning Results. One such study (College Board, 2005), based on an approach modeled after Webb (1997), provides a preliminary indication of the number and type of additional items that could enhance the alignment of the SAT to the Maine Learning Results. Once the study is complete, it will be necessary to develop a defensible methodology for administering, scoring, and combining the augmentation items with items from the SAT to produce an MEA score. One approach that could be used would be to develop the items necessary for augmentation, and to create test forms for English language arts and mathematics that are separate from the SAT test forms. Maine is interested in ensuring that most students who take the SAT will receive a college-reportable SAT score; therefore, the SAT must be administered in a standardized fashion. The augmentation items could be administered within a day or two of the SAT administration in separate test forms. Both the SAT and the test forms containing the augmentation items would also contain linking items that would allow for the equating of MEA scores from year to year. After test

administration, the SAT answer sheets would be scored, and SAT score reports would be generated and sent to students, by the College Board and its vendors, while the test forms containing the augmentation items would be scored by Measured Progress, Inc. As it does now, the College Board would transmit item-level data from the SAT to Measured Progress, Inc., so that it could match the SAT data to the data from the test forms containing the augmentation items and concurrently calibrate the augmentation and SAT items in order to place them onto the operational scale established the first year the MEA is administered. Using the linking items, student total scores on future forms of the MEA would be equated back to this scale. Each form of the MEA would be constructed to be parallel with respect to content and test difficulty.

Standard setting would be conducted on the MEA scale, which would be based on performance on the augmentation and SAT items. Descriptions of MEA performance levels that are aligned to the Maine Learning Results would be developed and standard setting panels would use these descriptions as a frame-of-reference for making cut score recommendations on the MEA scale. The State of Maine would use these performance level standards to report adequate yearly progress, by sub-group, for each of the Maine Learning Results.

References

College Board. (2005). Report *for the State of Maine on the alignment of the SAT and PSAT/NMSQT to the Maine Learning Results*. New York, NY: College Board.

Webb, N. L. (1997). Criteria *for alignment of expectations and assessments in mathematics and science education* (Council of Chief State School Officers and National Institute for Science Education Research Monograph No. 6). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.